1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
OY2 Easter Islanders OY2

out further preparation, the animal was put into the oven (81, vol. 38, p. 131). Chickens were cooked by putting hot stones inside the body; they were never plucked beforehand (90, p. 46).

According to a tradition noted by Knoche (123, p. 182), for which I found no evidence, fish were boiled in the natural holes so commonly found on rocks. Raw fish is not eaten by modern natives, but a tradition points out that they used to do so a few generations ago.

Water, for washing new-born babies or sick people, is heated by throwing (*tunu maea vera*) glowing stones into a big calabash (*kaha*) full of water.

Sweet potatoes were generally baked in earth ovens. My informant told me that by means of hot stones they were sometimes boiled in big calabashes. Today sweet potatoes are prepared in many ways, but they are still greatly appreciated when cooked underground.

Taro is cooked in the earth oven, fried, or boiled. Taro leaves (*raupa taro*), which are also cooked in the earth oven, constitute one of the most delicious foods of Easter Island.

Ti roots are no longer eaten but in former times they were cooked (86, p. 25);

> . . . The natives put them into a hole, wrapped with leaves and covered them with grass and hot stones. When the stones were getting cold, they were replaced by others, and so on during two or three days. The recompense of all that work is the facility to keep that fruit and its delicious flavor.

Tepano described the preparation of ti in almost the same terms, but he assured me that during the three to five days the food remained in the earth it was necessary to light a fire above the oven. Because of the present abundance of sugar, the ti is no longer a delicacy.

Bananas were ripened quickly for festivals by warming them in a long ditch. A fire was lighted in the ditch, similar to that kindled in ordinary oven cooking. A layer of fresh earth was spread to extinguish the flames, the walls of the ditch were lined with fresh banana leaves (*rito*) and the bananas deposited in the ditch were covered with earth. Three or four days later the fruits were ripe.

In former times arrowroot was eaten after it had been baked either upon or in the earth oven. It is no longer grown on the island.

Little salt, if any, was used to flavor the food, and even today the natives do without it. It has been noted that they do not need salt, since they drink brackish water and absorb air impregnated with sea salt.

Seabirds' eggs were once consumed in great quantities and the natives are still very fond of them. The few islanders that accompanied us on the expedition to Motu-nui ate more than a hundred eggs within half an hour.

Nowadays cooking is generally Chilean and maize is an important food in the diet.